FFLCH – USP
FLM 5577-1 Scientific Writing in English for International Publication: From Text to Context
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Formality

A. Underline the words/ expressions in text A that correspond to the words in **bold** in text B:

A	B
I heard they've been looking into cases in the States where someone has gone to prison for a crime they didn't actually commit. And what they've found is that about half of all those cases were down to people making mistakes with forensic evidence. How shocking is that?	Following a thorough **investigation**, it has been found that **faulty interpretation** of forensic evidence has contributed to approximately half of all **wrongful convictions** in the US in recent years.

B. Choose expressions from the list to replace the underlined words.

Text	List	
The popularity of camera phones has made it <u>more and more tricky</u> to prevent people from <u>taking photos</u> of things they <u>shouldn't</u> record, <u>e.g.</u> military equipment. But now <u>there's</u> a system that can <u>find out</u> any camera phones and <u>send out</u> rays of light to <u>mess up</u> any pictures they take.	detect difficult distort emit for example however	images increasingly photographing should not subjects there is

C. In formal academic English, it is best to avoid:
- Informal words/ expressions
- Abbreviations and contractions
- Phrasal verbs (when formal alternatives are available)
- Overuse of the pronoun ***I***, and the phrases ***I think*** and ***in my opinion***

D. **The passive:** Passive forms are used to shift the focus from agents to actions and processes. The use of passive helps to avoid the use of general words (e.g. *People* or *Someone*) when the identity of the agent is not known or is not important.

Rewrite the following items as passive constructions, making the necessary changes.

1. People used the North Star as a navigation aid.

   The North Star ____

2. You can see Venus in the middle of that day.

   Venus ____

3. They outlawed smoking in public places in 2003.

   Smoking ____

4. Someone has found a new galaxy circling the Milky Way.

   ____

5. Researchers repeated the tests a year later.

   ____

E. **It – constructions**: The use of it-constructions is a common way of making a statement more impersonal. e.g. *What they've found is … → It has been found that…*

   1. Most people agree that basic rights need to be respected.

   It is generally agreed that basic rights need to be respected.

   2. Scientists think that volcanic eruptions may have destroyed the dinosaurs.

   ____

   3. Nowadays we know that exercise can reverse many symptoms of ageing.

   ____

   4. Researchers have found that sun bathing is addictive.

   ____

   5. Some people might argue that sending young offenders to jail is counterproductive.

   ____

F. Common verbs used in *it-constructions* in academic English include:

accept	suggest	say	consider
believe	agree	think	show
find	claim	argue	understand

adapted from O'Connell, S. – Focus on IELTS. Pearson